

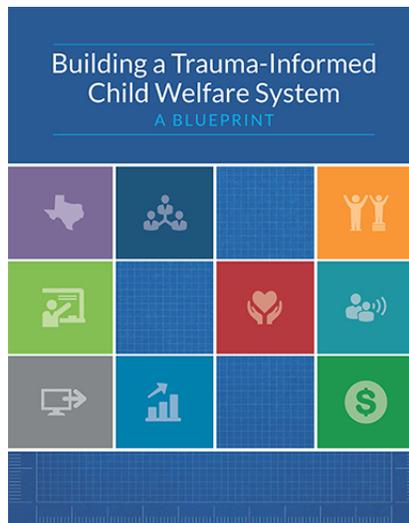
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, February 7, 2019

Press Release

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## Supreme Court Children's Commission Releases Report on Building a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System: A Blueprint



In Texas and nationwide, there is increased awareness to address the impact of trauma on children, youth, young adults, and families who interface with the child welfare system. On February 8, 2019 at the Texas Law Center, the Honorable Darlene Byrne and Children's Commission staff will present *Building a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System: A Blueprint*, a roadmap that outlines the paradigm shift needed to better serve Texas children and families involved with the child welfare system.

Judge Byrne of the 126<sup>th</sup> District Court, founding member of the Supreme Court Children's Commission, led the Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-Informed Care charged with developing strategies for the Blueprint. The goal of this dedicated collaborative is to realize a child welfare system that routinely views children and families through a trauma-

informed lens.

The Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines trauma as the result of "an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being."

Undoubtedly, children and youth who experience abuse or neglect are vulnerable to trauma, and suffer an adverse impact on their physical health, mental health, emotional well-being, child development, and interpersonal relationships. Studies on Adverse Childhood Experiences, also known as ACEs, demonstrate that childhood stress is linked to poor health outcomes including obesity, diabetes, depression, heart disease, cancer, and stroke, as well as alcohol and drug abuse, low graduation rates, and poor employment outcomes.

Developed through an extensive 18-month collaborative process, the Blueprint reflects the experience and resolve of over 100 professionals representing multiple systems and perspectives on

how Texas can improve its commitment to helping children and families overcome trauma and build resilient, productive lives.

*Building a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System: A Blueprint* is a framework for creating a statewide child welfare system that is trauma-informed and trauma-responsive. The Blueprint includes guiding principles and strategies that range from short-term to long-term in duration. Ultimately, the Blueprint is the foundation for change that is needed to provide structure for implementation and invite innovation and improvement in the approach to trauma-informed care in Texas.

As in 2012, when the Children’s Commission published a groundbreaking Education Blueprint to help improve education outcomes for children and youth in foster care, this Blueprint is also a first-of-its-kind. Supreme Court of Texas Chief Justice Nathan Hecht and Justice Eva Guzman write in their opening letter in the report: “The critical guidance provided in this Blueprint once again establishes Texas as a leader in charting a course to bring meaningful change to family and youth-serving systems that are immense, and quite often, incredibly complex....The opportunity for transformation is before us and we must embrace it. The future of Texas depends on it.”

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